

Life Lines

February, 1993

Published bi-monthly for employees of Hazleton-Saint Joseph Medical Center

Mardi Gras '93 Feb. 20

Okay gang, get ready to party!

The second annual Mardi Gras is planned for Saturday, Feb. 20 at Edgewood in the Pines and we're hoping the event will be as spectacular as last year's inaugural event.

Festivities start at 6:30 p.m. with a cocktail hour, dinner and then dancing until 1 a.m.

There will be prizes for costumes and we'll crown a king and queen. If you missed last year's party, you missed a wonderful time. Make sure you get to Mardi Gras '93.

Place your reservation with Personnel. Cost is \$10 per employee and \$25 per guest.



St. Joe's Business Office staff makes sure billing is handled efficiently.

We mean business!

The Business Office is responsible for turning information into revenues. Since our biggest challenge is making sure that information is accurate, we depend on everyone in the Medical Center to help guarantee that accuracy.

Because billing is the major source of income, submitting accurate billing to insurance companies is crucial. The Medical Center's reimbursement depends on it.

The more accurate the information, the more timely the reimbursement. Inaccurate information slows up reimbursements.

Correcting data entry errors, invalid diagnoses or procedure codes takes time and disrupts the entire process. That's why we appreciate the care you take when completing billing forms. Your close attention helps the Business Office do its job.

Sending the bill to the insurance company is just the final link in the chain. The Business Office has plenty of work to do before sending off the bill.

Coding is a major consideration and there are strict guidelines to follow.

For example, a diagnosis must be coded in accordance with the ICD-9 CM (International Classification of Diseases). Charges

SPOTLIGHT On... Business Office

must be coded in accordance with the CPT/HCPSCS (Current Procedure Terminology/Health Care Procedure Coding System).

Those odd-sounding acronyms may seem daunting to an outsider, but Business Office staffers deal with them every day. At the same time, we keep manual logs for Medicare and Medical Assistance payments.

Our staff needs to keep up to date on the many and constant changes in regulations governing both Medicare and Medical Assistance. Business Office staffers often send claims electronically, via the Medical Center computer system. As you can imagine, this is a time-consuming process.

Our cashiers play a key role in the Business Office, too. They are responsible for collecting money from patients upon discharge and for posting all payments

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Cheer up: Take a walk

Did you know you can improve your moods and control cigarette or snack cravings with a short period of walking?

A 10-minute brisk jaunt is enough to control cravings and improve your mood. Moderate exercise helps reduce the urges for these unhealthy habits.

We all know smoking increases heart disease, cancer and emphysema, to name a few. But it also increases facial wrin-



kling. Quitting now can prevent further damage.

Drinking 8 glasses of water a day helps flush harmful smoking products.

Speaking of hearts this month: Did you know holding a grudge can harm your heart?

Research has found a direct connection between anger and harmful changes in the cardiac status. Being angry makes the heart work harder with less effectiveness. That is why dealing with stress and conflict is healthier than keeping it suppressed.

Stop and think before reacting and decide on a more calm approach. It's just another simple way to stop heart disease before it starts.

Feeling stressed or depressed? Write



Timely Tips from Thomas

By Donna M. Thomas, R.N.
Employee Health Nurse

about it. Writing out your feelings helps you exhibit your emotions and makes you feel better overall.

Keeping in line with feeling better, how about a wake-up for those muscles that are in hibernation this winter?

Try these in the shower:

Neck Stretch — Drop head forward and hold. Press right ear to right shoulder and hold; now do the left side.

Shoulder rolls — Slowly roll shoulders forward, making big circles.

Chest — Clasp hands behind back and lift arms.

Shoulders — To stretch upper back, hug yourself.

Lower back — Pull in stomach, bend at waste, knees bent slightly, back straight and hold.

One last tip: Alcohol left in lead crystal decanters may not be healthy. It's better to use the original bottle and not drink from lead crystal glasses either.

In closing, Happy Valentine's Day to everyone, and I hope to see you all at the Mardi Gras. Let's burn off a few calories on the dance floor.

Thanks for flooding 'Open Line'

Thanks for your response to "Open Line."

We've received many good suggestions on how to improve service to our patients and working conditions for our staff.



For example, Tammy Parlatore, citing the nursing staff's concern about children contracting disease or risking injury suggested that the visiting age for children be enforced at 10 years and above. As a result, this policy is being reviewed.

There were also several suggestions regarding the use of the multi-purpose room as a break room, especially on prenatal class night. Tables are now being set up in the multi-purpose room on those days that it is being used as a break room.

Your suggestions have been valuable and appreciated. Please continue to let us know what's on your mind and we'll try to keep you up to date on suggestions and results.

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Visions of sugarplums

Kids, employees and Santa had a great time at the Children's Christmas Party Dec. 19 in the hospital cafeteria.

Employees deck the halls for Christmas

The St. Joe's family went all out to provide a holiday atmosphere for patients, visitors and employees at the medical center as staffers in the various departments showed their creativity in the Christmas decorating contest.

An independent panel of judges decided that the Maternity Center and the fourth-floor Telemetry Department had tied for

first place.

Angela Molli, L.P.N., and Laura Holderman, R.N. (left), show off some of the decorations in Telemetry's "Winter Wonderland" motif. At right, Mary Kovatch, R.N., holds a holiday fan and inspects the finished tree in the Maternity Center, where the theme was "A Victorian Christmas."

The second-floor Medical/Surgical Department took second-place with its "Santa's Express" entry and the Pharmacy won third-place for its "Yuletide Spirit" design.

Honorable mention awards went to the third floor Medical/Surgical Unit, the Department of Infection control room and the Emergency Room.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to everyone who helped make the hospital a cheerier place for the holidays!



Medical Spending Account cuts tax liability

For the second installment of Benefits Corner, we're looking at the advantages of the pre-tax Medical Spending Account. This benefit is a great way to pay for medical costs not covered by insurance. Let me know what topics you would like to see addressed in future installments of Benefit Corner.

Benefits Corner

By Craig R. Gimbi

C/O Human Resources Department

The Medical Spending Account is a pre-tax savings account for medical expenses not covered by another plan.

For example, it can cover deductibles, co-insurance, routine care,

eye care and/or glasses, dental expenses and orthodontia.

The advantage of a Medical Spending Account is that you reduce your taxable income by the amount of your contribution to the account.

Taxes saved include federal income and Social Security taxes. This means that most employees will save between 22 and 35 percent of the amount they contribute to the account.

It's important to remember that the IRS requires that dollars contributed to a Medical Spending Account that are not used by the end of the plan year must be forfeited under the "use it or lose it" provision.

Here is the case of a sample employee who decided to use the Medical Spending Account:

Just before the open enrollment, David took a close look at the upcoming medical expenses for his family.

David knows that most of these expenses will be covered by insurance. However, certain expenses will be his responsibility. His wife, Margaret, will be having elective surgery in January and his daughter will get braces in February. David knows that his share of these expenses will be \$500 next year.

Because he can carefully plan for these expenses, he places \$500 into his Medical Spending Account, reducing his taxable income from \$24,000 to \$23,500.

Each month David can submit a claim form and paid receipt to the Human Resources Department and receive reimbursement.

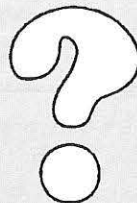
The bottom line: David saves \$114 in taxes.

Benefits Trivia

What is the maximum amount of pre-tax dollars allowed in our Medical Spending Account per benefit year?



- A: \$500
- B: \$1,000
- C: \$1,500
- D: \$5,000



The answer will be in the next issue of Lifelines. Don't forget to send in your questions.

Last issue's question: How much does Hazleton-Saint Joseph Medical Center pay per year for a single employee's Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage? Answer: C (\$1,776)

Deaths

Lawrence Shulenski

We would like to express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Lawrence (Larry) Shulenski, who passed away Jan. 6 after a long illness.

He had been part of our Medical Center family for three years.

Larry will be missed.

Upcoming events

❑ **Mardi Gras** — Feb. 20. Don't forget to wear a costume!

❑ **Children's Easter Party** — April 3.

❑ **Basketball Game** — March 26, vs. Holy Spirit Academy.

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Personals

The Respiratory Department family is growing!

Welcome to Benjamin Carl, son of Pam Ralston, and to Alexis Leigh, daughter of Michelle Dubravski.

Benjamin was born on Oct. 21, 1992, and weighed 8 pounds, 5 ounces.

Alexis was born Nov. 8, weighing in at 7 pounds, 10 ounces.

Much happiness.

* ————— *

Cheryl Oberto has passed her state boards and is now a licensed practical nurse.

Cheryl is working in 002 Medical/Surgical. Congratulations.

* ————— *

Congratulations to Maureen Serra and Traci Paris, who successfully passed their registry examinations and are new registered diagnostic cardiac sonographers.

* ————— *

Best wishes to Cathy Genasevich from Building & Grounds on her engagement to Michael Kowalcki. A February wedding is planned.

* ————— *

Marie Reinhart, Radiology; Stephanie McCullough, 002 Medical/Surgical, and Helen Williams, OB, spent 10 days in Israel in November.

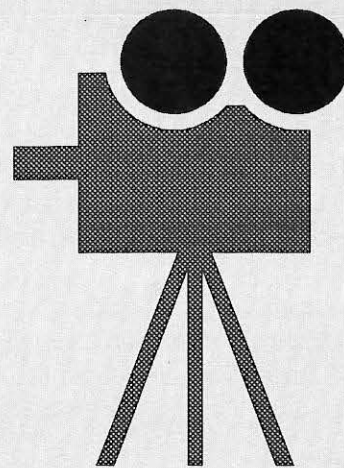
Movie Madness!

You can win two free passes to the movies simply by reading Lifelines.

Scattered throughout this issue are five employee numbers. Find yours and collect your passes.

Now that's the ticket!

And don't forget to send Lifelines information you would like to see in the newsletter.



Welcome aboard

The Hazleton-Saint Joseph Medical Center family is happy to welcome these new employees:

✓Angela Molli, LPN, Telemetry.

✓Mark Kovalick, pharmacist, Pharmacy.

✓Andrew Holderman, B&G technician, Building & Grounds.

✓Charles Mackey, security guard; Security.

✓Mary Dobson, industrial medicine R.N., Industrial Medicine.

✓Mary Charnigo, registered nurse, 003 Medical/Surgery.

✓Charlene Lazorick, pharmacy extern; Pharmacy.

Spotlight

Continued from Page 1

made to the Medical Center by patients and insurance companies. At day's end, they have to make sure all the figures balance.

The Business Office staff is proud to be part of the Medical Center family. We look forward to a continuing good relationship with our fellow employees.

Helen Dzurain retires after 35 years' service

Happy retirement to Helen Dzurain, who is leaving after 35 years of service to the Medical Center.

Helen's co-workers on 4 M/S-Telemetry honored her at a party at Edgewood in the Pines.

We'll miss you, Helen. Come and see us often.

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Department notes

Echo Lab

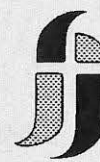
The Echo Lab has moved.

It is now located in Room 250, next to the Stress Lab. Our phone number remains the same: 250.

Building & Grounds

The department reports that its Christmas party held Dec. 18 was a huge success. Prizes were chanced off and everyone had a great time.

Life Lines



**Hazleton-Saint Joseph
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